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AUTHOR Olsen, Henry D.; Parsley, James F., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

In order to identify how social studies teachers attempt to resolve values conflict situations, 82 "disinterested" teachers in southeast Ohio responded to a questionnaire. The term "disinterested" is used to describe teachers who did not belong to a professional social studies organization, nor attend conferences specifically geared for updating expertise. Each teacher described a conflict incident and ranked it according to categories of decision making, justice, dissent and equality. Results indicate that the sample teachers are more interested in individual rather than group problems and that these incidents involve antagonists fairly close to themselves rather than socially distant. It is assumed that involvement in conflicts with individual persons is less mature than involvement with larger groups or institutions. Only three percent of the sample identified the antagonists as an institution. The teachers describe how they resolved the dilemma which is then categorized according to resolution by authority, argument, negotiation, capitulation, and avoidance. Forty-six percent of the teachers used authoritative means to solve problem situations while less than one-fourth used compromise as a solution. These results confirm those of Frankels (ED 092 445) whose research on "interested" teachers also indicates that teachers are unable to perceive a situation from another's viewpoint. (DE)

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1127 CARROLL ST.
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RESOLUTION OF VALUE CONFLICTS BY CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Henry D. Olsen
Medgar Evers College
City University of New York
and
James F. Parsley, Jr
Central Washington State College

A paper presented at the College and University Faculty Association during the Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Chicago, Illinois, Nove ber, 1974.

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ABSTRACT

To identify how social studies teachers attempt to resolve a situation in which values conflict, 91 teachers in southeast Ohio were asked to respond to an instrument developed by Fraenkel (1972), that was modified from the De Cecco Model (1970).

Results indicate that when teachers describe instances in which they solve a pressing classroom problem they identified the "Interpersonal Distance" as personal rather than group problems. And, the solutions they identified were authoritative rather than argumentative, negotiative or avoidance. It was also noted that teachers rarely use compromise as an approach. These results were not significantly different from those conclusions of Fraenkel (1972).

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Medgar Evers College
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INTRODUCTION

Most teachers recognize that they should teach values in social studies classes. More exactly, these teachers admit that students should engage in valuing - that is, forming their values in an atmosphere of free inquiry. The wide disagreement among the nation's teachers results from defining a value and planning a process for its use.

VALUES DEFINED

Many social scientists agree that the term "attitudes" and "value" can be used interchangeably, and there are many acceptable definitions. However, rather than total uninimity social scientists differ contentually rather conceptually in the usage of the terms.

Kluckhohn (Parsons & Shils, 1951) defines a value as "...a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from avaliable modes, means, and ends of action." Parsons (1951) holds that "...an element of a shared symbolic system which serves as a criterion or standard for selection among the alternatives of orientation which are intrinsically open in a situation may be called a value."

Educators (West Virginia Curriculum Committee, 1968) have also sought to clarify the defin tion of "values" for curricular consideration. This definition cites value as

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"...an attitude held in esteem by society which may be accepted, rejected, ignored, modified or transferred by the individual within the society depending upon his frame of reference or accumulated experiences.

Finally, Rokeach (1968) regards values as the most central element of human belief, systems and defines values as "...a type of belief, centrally located within one's total belief system, about how one ought or ought not to behave, or about some end-state of existance worth or not worth attaining."

However, in spite of the aforementioned definitions, and there are many more, the meaning of the term "values" is by no means clear (Macmillan and Kneller, 1964). About the only agreement that emerges is that a value represents something important in human existence.

PLACE OF VALUE TEACHING IN THE CLASSROOM

For many years educators have struggled with the concept of values education based on a moral perspective. A consequence of this conflict has been the delineation of at least three distinctively different approaches to values education.

Laissez-faire

At one extreme are found those educators and laymen who believe that the school should not involve itself with teaching values. Advocates of this position are often characterized by a belief that values education falls more legitimately within the domain of the home and church rather than the school, and as such, need not, and should not, be included within the framework of the school. Such advocates apparently feel that the school's role is to function primarily within the cognitive realm (Ebel, 1972).

INDOCTRINATION

At the other extreme exist those educators and laymen who feel that a central role of the school is to transmit those values that are consistent with the so-called "ideals of American democracy." This position becomes quite apparent upon examination of various professional testbooks and course syllabi. For instance, Quillen and Hanna (1969) have indicated that school personnel are responsible for selecting and transmitting from the American cultural tradition those values (as well as skills and knowledges) to be perpetuated by society.

Value Clarification

Between the above mentioned extreme positions exists a middle position. The advocates of this position contend that values education is an important dimension of the

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school's curriculum. Raths (1966) has stated this point clearly:

> ...We are interested in the processes that are going on. We are not much interested in identifying the values which children hold. We are much more interested in the process because we believe that in a world that is changing as rapidly as our, each child must develop habits of examining his purposes, aspirations, attitudes, feelings, etc. if he is to find the most intelligent relationship between his life and the surrounding world, and if he is to make a contribution to the creation of a better world.

TEACHERS AND VALUE TEACHING

During the 52nd Annual Meeting of NCSS the senior author was chairman of a CUFA Paper Session entitled "Values--Identification, Conflict, Resolution." During that session Jack Fraenkel presented the paper "Teacher Approaches to the Resolution of Value Conflict." Fraenkel (1972) asserted that "...it seems logical to assume that a key factor in the success of any program,or materials,directed toward values education lies to a considerable extent in the degree to which teachers, who use these materials, are able to help students identify and clarify not only their own values, but also those of others in a wide variety of settings and cultures." Fraenkel's contention is that the theories of Piaget (1958) and Kohlberg (1964, 1971) argue that the most fundamental change in the cognitive and moral functioning of individuals is that known as decentering--the ability to see events from a point of view other than one's own.

In an attempt to identify how social studies teachers attempt to resolve a situation in which values conflict, Fraenkel distributed an instrument, modified from the DeCecco model (1970), to 92 teachers, representing both elementary and secondary levels, randomly selected from approximately 600 persons attending two different social studies conferences. After analyzing the data Fraenkel states "...the results of this study are dismaying to say the least, for they appear to suggest overwhelmingly that this sample of teachers seemed, in the main, unable to perceive a situation from another's viewpoint."

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this research is to replicate the Fraenkel (1972) study with a supposedly "disinterested" social studies teacher population. The term "disinterested" is used to describe those classroom social studies teachers who do not belong to a professional social studies organization, nor attend conferences specifically geared for updating expertise, versus that "interested" population of Fraenkel (1972).

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METHOD

From two hundred twenty (220) teachers in eleven (11) school districts in Southeast Ohio, who were indentified as not belonging to a social studies professional organization, nor having attended a national, state or local conference geared toward updating expertise in social studies instruction, eighty-two (82) were asked to fill out the Fraenkel Interview Form (See Appendix A) (This instrument was modeled after a written interview form used by DeCecco and Others (1970) to interview some 7000 teenagers in junior and senior high schools in Phildelphia and greater New York areas) These instruments were administered, and collected, by eleven (11) representative, one from each school district, and forwarded to the senior author for analysis.

Before analysis the forms were given to an intelligent housewife, with some teaching experience, as a check on the validity of the categorization system. The housewife read each "incident" and assigned each of the incidents to one of the four categories (decision-making, justice, dissent, and equality). She was able to assign all incidents to one of the four categories in the interview form. Here assignments were in complete agreement with the Ss categorization of described incidents.

Analysis

Means and percentages were tabulated to the answers to questions 1 and 4 merely be counting, by category, the response of each of the 82 Ss. These means, and percentages, of the "disinterested" Ss were then compared with those means, and percentages, of the "interested" Se (Fraenkel, 1972) by means of a Chi Square.

A content analysis was done by the two authors, independently, to answer questions 2 and 3.

RESULTS

Type of delimma perceived

All eighty-two (82) "disinterested" Ss were able to assign the incidents they described to one of the specific categories on the interview form (See Appendix A). Results indicate that like the "interested" Ss, the "disinterested" Ss, also categorized decision making as the most frequent description of their incident, followed by justice, dissent and equality.

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Insert Table I about here

Interms of ability to decenter

One aspect of the ability to "decenter" is represented by what De Cecco (1970) calls "Interpersonal Distance". Interpersonal Distance represents the degree to which the writer of an incident is personally involved in the incident he describes. As in the Fraenkel (1972) study, distance was operationally defined as the pronouns "he or they" by the teachers interviewed to describe the protagonist in their incident. It was assumed, as did Fraenkel (1972) that "he or they", rather than "I or we", represented the ability to see things from another point of view (decenter). Table II illustrates that.

Insert Table II about here

"disinterested" Ss described their indicents (22%), as did the "interested" Ss (25%), as having a distant protagonist. Thus, it can be concluded that most "disinterested" Ss were concerned with personal rather than distant problems. This conclusion for the "disinterested" Ss does not significantly differ from the conclusions of Fraenkel (1972) on the "interested" Ss.

Another aspect of decentering involved the ability of individuals to relate to larger and larger groups of people as they mature (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). On the basis of this theoretical argument, the author's as did Freankel (1972), hypothesized that the "disinterested" Ss in this study would be more likely to describe the protagonists of their incidents as groups rather than individuals. Following the DeCecco procedure, the proportion of Ss describing incidents in terms of "we or they" was taken, operationally, to represent that proportion of the Ss thinking of groups rather than individuals, as identified by using "I or he".

Insert Table III about here

Results, as indicated in Table III, illustrate that "disinterested" Ss described their incidents (22%), as did the "interested" Ss (20.6), in terms of groups. Thus, it can be concluded that most " disinterested" Ss were concerned with individual rather than group problems. This conclusion does not significantly differ from the conclusion of Fraenkel (1972) on the "interested" Ss.

A third test of decentering would involve the distance between an individual and the antogonist in the incident the S describes - i.e., the other party in the conflict. DeCecco (1970) defines this dimension of interpersonal involvement as Relative Status. This dimension was utilized to estimate the amount of social distance.

Operationally, like Fraenkel, it was assumed that if the incident described by the "disinterested" Ss involved self, a peer, or a student as an antagoinst, this would be a less distant antagonist than if the antagonist were described as someone or something (i.e., an institution) else. Description of an incident with more distant people would suggest an involvement with more diverse points of view. Table IV illustrates that over 62% of the "disinterested" Ss, as did the "interested Ss (Fraenkel, 1972), described their peers (13.4%), or their students (42.7%). Thus, it can be concluded that most "disinterested" Ss are involved with antagonists fairly close to themselves rather than socially distant. This conclusion for the "disinterested" Ss does not significantly differ from the conclusions of Fraenkel (1972) on the "interested' Ss.

Insert Table IV about here

DeCecco (1970) used the term Personification, as did Fraenkel (1972), to indicate the abstractness of the antagonist identified in the incident. It was assumed that involvement in conflicts with individual persons was less mature than involvement with larger groups. This assumption is based on another of Inhelder and Piaget's (1958) assertions that as an individual matures he is able to relate more and more to institutional structures, as well as specific individuals and small groups.

Insert Table V about here

Identification of an institution as an antagonist could be seen as evidence of social maturity of the describer of the incident. Results, as indicated in Table V, for the "disinterested" Ss (3.7%), as elll as the "interested' Ss (4.4%) (Fraenkel, 1972), are overwhelming in their direction. Thus, it can be concluded that the antagonists identified by the "disinterested" Ss are close to home. This conclusion for the "disinterested" Ss does not significantly differ from the conclusions of Fraenkle (1972) on the "interested" Ss.

Solution to incidents

The Fraenkel Interview Form (Fraenkel, 1972), see Appendix A, asked the Ss not only to describe a dilemma in which they were involved, but also to explain how they attempted to resolve the dilemma. The Ss responses to this request were also analyzed and categorized in terms of the following descriptions:

Authoritative - resolution by recourse to the authority of the Ss position as a teacher;

Argumentative - resolution by recourse to argument (essentially from the Ss point of view);

Negotiated - resolution by recourse to mutual discussion of each individual's position, with some form of compromise occuring;

Capitulation - resolution by protagonist acceding to the antagonist's demands or position;

Avoidance - resolution by ignoring the conflict and/or doing nothing.

Insert Table VI about here

Table VI indicates that 46.4% of the "disinterested" Ss turned to authoritative means (categories of authority and argument), with the "interested" Ss turning to authoritative means 46.7%, (Fraenkel, 1972), to resolve the dilemma in which they were involved. Over 28% of the "disinterested" Ss, the same was true of the "interested" Ss (Fraenkel, 1972), tended to avoid the conflict of the incident. Less than one-fourth (24.1%) of the "disinterested" Ss, as was true in the "interested" Ss (21.7%) (Fraenkel, 1972), tried to negotiate with the other party involved. For the "disinterested" Ss, as was the case for the "interested" Ss, compromise seemed to be an approach which most of the Ss tended to avoid. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the "interested" Ss resolved incidents through authoritative means and tended to utilize compromise least often. These conclusions for the "disinterested" Fraenkel (1972) on the "interested"Ss.

TABLE I. STORY CATEGORIES ASSIGNED BY "INTERESTED" AND "DISINTERESTED" SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

CATEGORIES	NUMBER		PERCENTAGE	
	Disinterested	Interested	Disinterested	Interested
Decision Making	37	38	45.1	41.1
Justice	27	24	32.9	26.0
Dissent	12	16	14.6	17.4
Equality	6	14	7.4	15.5
Total	82	92	100.0	100.0

TABLE II. INTERPERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF TEACHER AND PROTAGONIST IN INCIDENT DESCRIBED (DISTANCE) BY "INTERESTED" AND DISINTERESTED" SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

PROTAGONIST	NUMBER		PERCENTAGE	
	Disinterested	interested	Disinterested	interested
I or We	58	69	78	75
He or They	24	23	22	25
Total	82	92	100	100

TABLE III. INTERPERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF TEACHER AND PROTAGONIST IN INCIDENT DESCRIBED (GROUP SIZE) BY "INTERESTED" AND "DISINTERESTED" SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

PROTAGONIST	NUMBER		PERCENTAGE	
	Disinterested	Interested	Disinterested	Interested
I or We	58	73	78	79.4
He or They	24	19	22	20.6
Total	82	92	100	100.0

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TABLE IV. PERCEIVED ANTAGONIST AS SEEN BY "INTERESTED" AND "DISINTERESTED" SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS (RELATIVE STATUS)

ANTAGONIST	NUMBER		PERCENTAGE	
	Disinterested	Interested	Disinterested	Interested
Student	35	38	42.7	41.1
Authority	21	23	25.6	25.0
Peers	11	15	13.4	16.3
Parents	6	7	7.3	8.0
Self	5	5	6.2	5.0
Institutions	3	3	3.7	3.3
Community	1	1	1.1	1.1
Total	82	92		

TABLE V. IDENTIFICATION OF ANTAGONIST AS PERSON OR INSTITUTION BY "INTERESTED" AND "DISINTERESTED" SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS (PERSONIFICATION)

ANTAGONIST	NUMBER		PERCENTAGE	
	Disinterested	Interested	Disinterested	Interested
Person	79	88	96.3	95.6
Institution	3	4	3.7	4.4
Total	82	92	100.0	100.0

TABLE VI . SOLUTIONS TO DELIMMA SITUATION IDENTIFIED BY "INTERESTED" AND "DISINTERESTED" SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

SOLUTION	NUMBER		PERCENTAGE	
	Disinterested	Interested	Disinterested	Interested
Authority	35	35	42.7	38.0
Argument	9	8	3.7	8.7
Negotiation	19	20	24.1	21.7
Capitulation	2	3	2.5	3.3
Avoidance	23	26	28.0	28.3
Total	82	92	100.0	100.0

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Total	82	92		

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Avoidance	23	26	28.0	28.3
Total	82	92	100.0	100.0

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CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study for "disinterested" Ss, as Fraenkel (1972) concluded for "interested" Ss, are dismaying to say the least, for they appear to suggest overwhelmingly, that teachers, whether they are "disinterested" or "interested" are unable to perceive a situation from another's viewpoint.

Most of the "disinterested" Ss (78%) were concerned with personal rather than distant problems. Most (78%) described the protagonist of their incident as an individual rather than as a group. Over half (62.3%) described the antagonist in this incident as someone fairly close to themselves rather than socially distant. And almost all (96.3%) identified the antagonist in their incident as a person rather than an institution. Furthermore, less than one-fourth (24.1%) attempted to resolve the value conflict in which they were involved by recourse to negotiation. 70.7% relied on either authoritative dictums, or tried to avoid the issue entirely.

If the results of this study on "disinterested" Ss and Fraenkel's (1972) study on "interested" Ss are true, then materials designed for value education, no matter how carefully or cleverly prepared they may be, will be of little assistance if the teachers using those materials are themselves unable to perceive, let alone understand, the viewpoints and/or positions of others.

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APPENDIX A

Sometimes people have trouble being as "fair" or "just" as they would like to be. Sometimes a person is not sure what is the "fair" thing to do. Other times it seem as if no one can change the way things are enough to make things "fair" in a place like a school. Often times there appears to be a number of things that a person might do in a given situation. In the space provided below, please describe an incident in which you have been involved or that you witnessed in which you had to choose from among two or more alternative ways of responding and in which the "fair" or "just" thing to do was not clear.

_____

_____

Please reread what you wrote and check to see that you have put in some thing about each topic below. As you find each item, check it off in the space below. Please add to your story any items you do not already have in it.

Where it happened	( )
Who started it	( )
Who else was there	( )
What problems came up	( )
How the problems were handled	( )
How else the problem might have been handled	( )

Now: we would like to know which of the following names for problems in dealing with people fits your story best. Please put number One (1) next to the name that fits best, number two (2) next to the name that fits second best, and so on.

Your story raised problems of:

Decision-Making	Having a voice in what rules should be made and how they should be enforced	( )
Justice	Giving a person who has been accused of something a fair chance to defend himself	( )
Dissent	Criticizing, protesting, or refusing to take part in a group	( )
Equality	Getting the same chances in life no matter what your race, religion, sex, or economic status may be.	( )

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